

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 EB-07 COME-00

OPIC-06 LAB-04 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SIL-01 SS-15 NSC-05 IGA-02 AGR-10

XMB-04 SAM-01 /083 W

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O 032005Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6554

DEPT OF TREASURY IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1221

(CORRECTED COPY PARA 7)

USIA FOR VOA, IPS, INA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (SIMON, WILLIAN E), SY US

SUBJ: SECRETARY SIMON'S DAMASCUS DEPARTURE STATEMENT

1. SIMON: WE HAD A VERY PRODUCTIVE AND BUSY DAY IN DISCUSSING, AS I SAID THIS MORNING, THE VARIOUS AREAS IN WHICH WE CAN STRENGTHEN OUR ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FUTURE. I JUST LEFT YOUR PRESIDENT ASAD AFTER A TWO-HOUR SESSION IN WHICH WE DISCUSSED AREAS OF A GLOBAL AS WELL AS A BILATERAL NATURE OF EVERY ASPECT OF POLICY. IT WAS, AS I SAY, EXTREMELY PRODUCTIVE, ALBEIT TOO BRIEF AND I WILL LOOK FORWARD TO RETURNING IN THE FUTURE WHEN WE CAN GET INTO SOME OF THE DETAILS OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WHICH OBVIOUSLY TIME DID NOT

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PERMIT TODAY.

2. QUESTION: ANY SPECIFIC IDEAS?

3. SIMON: NO, AS FAR AS THE SPECIFICS, WE SPOKE OF HOW CAN WE ATTRACT THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND THE BUSINESSMEN AND THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM OF THE U.S. TO COME TO SYRIA AND INVEST IN THIS COUNTRY, THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN AND THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION, THE EDUCATION OF OUR FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AS TO THE TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES THAT INDEED DO EXIST IN THIS COUNTRY FOR THEIR MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS.

4. QUESTION: ISRAEL HAS REPORTED HUGE AID TO THEM. ANYTHING LEFT FOR US? (LAUGHTER)

5. SIMON: WELL, AS YOU KNOW, THE U.S. AS FAR AS FOREIGN AID IS CONCERNED, DOES NOT RESTRICT ITS GENEROSITY TO ONE NATION. IT HAS A LONG HISTORY OF GIVING AID TO MANY COUNTRIES. SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II, I GUESS WE HAVE GIVEN IN THE AREA OF 125 BILLION DOLLARS. WE CONTINUE TO GIVE LARGE AMOUNTS OF AID TO ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, BOTH ON A BILATERAL BASIS AS WELL AS THROUGH THE MULTILATERAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, THE WORLD BANK, THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, THROUGH AID, THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK, PL-480, AND CCC. WE HAVE MANY PROGRAMS TO ASSIST MANY NATIONS IN THIS WORLD, MOST ESPECIALLY THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH WE THINK ARE TERRIBLY IMPORTANT. WE WANT TO HELP DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO HELP THEMSELVES...BECAUSE, AS I BELIEVE I SAID THIS MORNING, TO SET THE ENVIRONMENT FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN THIS COUNTRY, AS WELL AS IN THE REST OF THE WORLD, WILL HELP US TO ASSURE A LASTING PEACE.

6. QUESTION: MR SECRETARY, MY COLLEAGUES AND I WOULD LIKE TO COMBINE MANY QUESTIONS INTO ONE. IS THERE ANY EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES BETWEEN PRESIDENT FORD AND PRESIDENT ASAD THROUGH YOU, AND ARE THERE ANY NEW IDEAS CONCERNING THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST
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WITH AMERICAN HELP?

7. SIMON: WE DID NOT GET INTO ANY OF THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AS FAR AS THE VERY DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS THAT ARE ONGOING IN THE MIDDLE EAST. NO. OBVIOUSLY I WILL TRANSMIT TO PRES FORD A COMPLETE MEMORANDUM ON THE DISCUSSION OF OUR CONVERSATIONS HERE NOT ONLY WITH PRES ASAD, BU WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND THE

OTHER MINISTERS AS WELL, COVERING ALL THESE AREAS. SOME OF THIS DISCUSSION WAS OBVIOUSLY OF A SENSITIVE NATURE. OBVIOUSLY, THERE ARE AREAS WHERE WE HAVE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION. IF THERE WERE NO DIFFERENCES OF OPINION, WE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEMS. BUT IN A FRIENDLY, COOPERATIVE WAY I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE'RE GOING TO WORK OUT THESE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION... THAT THE OBSTACLES THAT HAVE BEEN PUT IN OUR WAY WILL BE SURMOUNTED...BECAUSE FOR ONE OVERRIDING REASON.. IT IS IN OUR BEST INTEREST TO DO SO. A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS NOT ONLY IN THE INTEREST OF THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT THE U.S. AND THE REST OF THE WORLD AS WELL...AND SO I HAVE CONFIDENCE AND I'M OPTIMISTIC THAT WE ARE GOING TO SURMOUNT THE PROBLEMS; BUT AT THE SAME TIME, AS WE ARE WORKING TOWARD THIS JUST AND LASTING PEACE, WE ARE GOING TO TRAVEL DOWN THE ROAD TOGETHER OF STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS. THERE IS MUCH THAT CAN BE DONE IN THIS COUNTRY AND THERE ARE MANY WAYS THAT THE U.S. CAN ASSIST SYRIA IN ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

8. QUESTION: ON MESSAGES SIR, DID YOU CARRY OR ARE YOU TAKING BACK ANY MESSAGE?

9. SIMON: NO, NOTHING OF A SPECIFIC NATURE. NO.

10. QUESTION: ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC THAT THE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WHICH YOU TALKED ABOUT CAN BE BRIDGED IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

11. SIMON: WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN BY THE NEAR FUTURE. I WOULDN'T WANT TO PUT A TIME FRAME ON UNCLASSIFIED

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IT...BUT YES, AS I SAID, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO SURMOUNT THESE OBSTACLES AND THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO SECURE THIS LASTING PEACE THAT WE ALL DESIRE. AND AS FAR AS THE ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING AND

THE COOPERATIVE ACTIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, YES--THAT'S EASY. WE HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE WITH THIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE PAST TWO YEARS WITH MANY OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND WE ADOPT COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS DEPENDING ON THE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT EXIST IN THAT COUNTRY. EACH COUNTRY IS DIFFERENT, THEY START FROM A DIFFERENT BASE. CERTAINLY SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH IS AN OIL PRODUCER, WISHES TO INDUSTRIALIZE AND DIVERSIFY; THE SYRIAN ECONOMY IS OBVIOUSLY DIFFERENT AND OBVIOUSLY MUCH STRONGER

THAN MOST IN MANY WAYS. JUST LOOK, FOR EXAMPLE, AT SYRIA'S GROWTH IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. WHILE THE WORLD AS A WHOLE HAS BEEN EXPERIENCING THE WORST RECESSION SINCE THE DEPRESSION OF THE 1930'S, THE SYRIAN ECONOMY HAS GROWN IN REAL TERMS BETWEEN 18 AND 12 PERCENT. THIS IS CLEARLY A VERY PRODUCTIVE BIT OF ECONOMIC MACHINERY AND A SYSTEM---AND ONE WHERE WE CAN BUILD ON A VERY SOUND FOUNDATION. THAT IS THE CAUSE---FOR MY OPTIMISM ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE.

12. QUESTION: A LAST QUESTION. YOU SAID IN THE MORNING THAT IT WAS YOUR FIRST VISIT HERE?

13. SIMON: IT IS THE FIRST VISIT, I'M TOLD, OF ANY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY FROM THE U.S. I'M THE FIRST SECRETARY TO HAVE COME TO SYRIA. I WILL NOT BE THE LAST--I MOST CERTAINLY WISH TO RETURN IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO TOGETHER.

14. MINISTER OF ECONOMY IMADI: THANK YOU.

15. QUESTION: HOW DID YOU LIKE THE VISIT?

16. SIMON: WELL...ONE OF THE REASONS I WANT TO RETURN IN THE NEAR FUTURE IS SO THEY WILL LET
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ME OUT SO I CAN SEE SOMETHING OF YOUR GREAT COUNTRY (LAUGHTER). I SPENT ALL MY TIME IN MEETINGS ALL DAY AND I DIDN'T HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE ALL OF THE WONDERFUL SIGHTS THAT MY WIFE DID. NEXT TIME I COME I'M GOING TO SEND HER TO THE MEETINGS AND I'M GOING TO GO OUT TO THE SUQ.

17. MRS SIMON: NO, NO. I LIKE IT THE WAY IT IS (LAUGHTER).

18. PRESS: THANK YOU, MR SECRETARY.

19. SIMON: THANK YOU.
MURPHY

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